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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1168  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1870  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0829  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ASTANA 001292

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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: UNHCR, UIGHUR ACTIVIST HAVE RECEIVED NO  
REPORTS OF CHINESE UIGHUR DEPORTATIONS

REF: ASTANA 1210

Classified: by Charge d'Affaires Steven H. Fagin, Reasons 1.4 (b)/(d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: A UNHCR official told us on July 28 that UNHCR has received no reports that Kazakhstani authorities have deported Chinese Uighurs back to China. However, he was aware of several cases of Uighur refugee activists being detained by the Almaty police for several hours, which he believes was meant as a warning to them "not to start trouble." He also briefed us on his recent visit to two border posts on the Kazakhstan-China border. According to him, the Migration Police and Ministry of Emergency Situations recently held a refresher seminar for their employees at the border posts on proper procedures for handling refugees. An activist within the local Uighur community separately told us on July 28 that she also has not heard of any deportations of Chinese Uighurs. END SUMMARY.

UNHCR: NO REPORTS OF UIGHUR DEPORTATIONS...

¶2. (C) On July 28, we met in Almaty with UNHCR Protection Officer N.L. Narasimha Rao to ask him whether the Kazakhstani authorities have taken any action against Chinese Uighurs living in Kazakhstan in the wake of the recent Uighur-related unrest in China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR). We specifically inquired as to whether there is any evidence that Chinese Uighurs have been deported from Kazakhstan back to China. Rao confirmed for us that UNHCR has received no such reports. He said that UNHCR has held several meetings with the Uighur refugee community since the beginning of the unrest in Xinjiang, and he was fairly certain that had such actions taken place, UNHCR would have heard about them immediately.

... BUT SEVERAL INCIDENTS AGAINST CHINESE UIGHURS

¶3. (C) Rao did tell us, however, that there have been five separate instances of Chinese Uighur refugees being detained by the Almaty police and held for several hours without any formal explanation for the detention. All of them were released after UNHCR's intervention. Rao described the detained refugees as "community activists" and speculated that the detentions may have been meant as a warning from the authorities "not to start trouble." He also told us that over the past six months, there have also been three instances of physical attacks against Chinese Uighur refugees. In all three cases, the victims said they did not know their attackers and did not know the reason behind the attack. Rao said that attacks against refugees are quite rare in Kazakhstan, which made UNHCR "somewhat worried" that all three attacks specifically involved Chinese Uighurs. Despite

these incidents, Rao's overall take is that "all is quiet" for the Uighur refugee population in Kazakhstan.

#### SITUATION AT THE CHINESE BORDER

¶4. (C) Rao also told us that he recently traveled to two border posts, Dostyk and Korghas, on the China-Kazakhstan border, where he met with representatives of the Migration Police and the Border Guards. He said that both border posts were well outfitted with detection equipment and electronic fencing, which in his view significantly limits the possibilities of illegal border crossings. Rao was quite impressed by the work of Migration Police and the Ministry of Emergency Situations. He said that the two agencies recently held a refresher seminar for their employees at the border posts on proper procedures for handling refugees, and that the Ministry of Emergency Situations redirected some of its financing from other projects to accommodate potential increased flow of migrants from China. Rao doubted that the flow would increase significantly because of the Xinjiang unrest, but expressed confidence that individuals who reach the Migration Police and ask for asylum "will be given appropriate care."

¶5. (C) Rao maintained, however, that the Border Guards -- who fall under Kazakhstan's Committee for National Security Committee (KNB) and make admission decisions at border crossings -- have an agreement with their Chinese counterparts to turn back individuals without proper passports and visas. Rao's ventured that because of this agreement, the Border Guards might turn back individuals who request asylum at admission if their documents are not in order. (COMMENT: As a practical matter, it seems quite unlikely that individuals would make it past the Chinese border authorities to the Kazakhstani side if they do not possess the appropriate valid travel documents. END

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COMMENT.)

#### UIGHUR ACTIVIST ALSO HAS NO REPORTS OF DEPORTATIONS

¶6. (C) We also met on July 28 with Tamara Mamedova, the head of the National Uighur Association. Mamedova, a Kazakhstani Uighur, is a prominent activist within the local Uighur community who works extensively with the Chinese Uighur refugee population. Mamedova told us that, like Rao, she has not heard of any deportations of Chinese Uighur refugees in the wake of the Xinjiang unrest. She said that the Almaty authorities seem keen on working with the local Uighur community and have granted it several permits for demonstrations in response to the events in Xinjiang (reftel).

FAGIN